REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested. Currently, claims 7-15, 17 and 27-35 are pending in this application.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103:

Claims 7-11, 17 and 30-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Christianson et al (U.S. '186, hereinafter "Christianson"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

For a reference to anticipate a claim, each element must be found, either expressly or under principles of inherency, in the reference. Each element of the claimed invention is not found in Christianson. For example, Christianson fails to disclose a first searching agent for searching a first advertising board for advertising services of information brokers and a second searching agent for searching a second advertising board for advertising services of at least two separate information content suppliers, as required by independent claims 7 and 31. Christianson also fails to disclose a first searching agent for searching a content service provider advertising board for advertising at least two separate content service providers and a second searching agent for searching a broker advertising board, as required by independent claim 17. Christianson also fails to teach or suggest a customer agent for searching a service agent board for advertising services of service agents, and a customer provider agent board for advertising the services of at least two separate information content providers,

wherein a selected service agent selects at least one information content provider from the customer provider as required by claim 30.

Christianson thus fails to disclose the two advertising board platforms as claimed. The Office Action has taken various interpretations of Christianson's teachings in its allegation that Christianson discloses all of the claim limitations. As discussed in detail below, the interpretations taken by the Office Action are not supported by the teachings of Christianson, and even if these interpretations were supported, the teachings of Christianson would still not disclose all of the claim limitations. While the discussion below is directed to independent claim 7, similar (but not necessarily identical) comments apply to independent claims 17, 30 and 31.

The Office Action alleges that Christianson's aggregation engine 38 discloses a second searching agent for searching a second advertising board for available services based on the results of search of the first advertising board and the request from the user as required by claim 7. (See pg. 3, lines 12-14 of the Office Action). Applicant respectfully disagrees with this allegation. The aggregation engine 38 does not perform any search as claimed. Instead, the aggregation engine 38 uses retrieved wrappers for the N most relevant sources from a wrapper database 40 to format a user query into forms recognized by each information source, and to understand the information returned by each information source 33. In particular, col. 8, lines 21-42 of Christianson states the following:

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"The aggregation engine is the coordinating function of the integrator module. It receives the user query from the user interface module and requests the query router to provide a list of the N information sources most relevant to the given query. Then it retrieves the N wrappers for the N information sources from the wrapper database. Guided by the N wrappers, the aggregation engine translates the query into the request formats accepted by each of the N information sources and transfers the N requests to the I/O manager for network transmission. For some sources, the query may be in the format of a form to be returned. When a response is received from an information source, the aggregation engine, again guided by the appropriate wrapper, extracts data from the response and places it into a list of data fields, called a tuple format, relevant to the particular information domain. Optionally, each tuple can be assigned a priority order using a method appropriate to the particular information domain. Finally when the incremental display manager requests data to present to the user, perhaps in response to a more-button request, the aggregation engine passes the tuples to the user interface module, sorted in priority order if a priority is determined (emphasis added)."

Moreover, col. 7, lines 46-56 of Christianson states the following:

"The retrieved wrappers are used by aggregation engine 38, first, to format the query into forms recognized by each information source, and second, to understand the information returned by each information source 33 in order to eliminate extraneous formatting matter and to put the received information into a common format. This formatted information is then aggregated and passed to the user interface module for presentation 32 to the user according to preferred incremental display method 36. The user display is also controlled by stored user preferences 35 (emphasis added)."

As described above, the aggregation engine 38 is a translational/formatting mechanism. After receiving a user inquiry, the aggregation engine 38 requests the query router to provide a list of N information sources and retrieves corresponding N wrappers. The aggregation engine 38 then translates the query using the N

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wrappers to a suitable format. The aggregation engine therefore does not perform searching of an advertising board as claimed, but rather performs formatting.

The Office Action alleges that the wrapper database 40 discloses the claimed second advertising board for advertising the services of at least two separate information content suppliers. (See pg. 3, lines 9-11 of the Office Action). Applicant respectfully disagrees with this allegation. First, it is unknown how a database of wrappers (descriptions of the information source and its requirements as described in col. 7, lines 44-45) forms an "advertising board" at all. Even if the wrapper database 40 does form an "advertising board", Christianson clearly fails to disclose "providing the results of the search of the second advertising board from the second advertising board to the first advertising board, and transferring the results of the first advertising board to the user interface through the first searching agent (emphasis added)," as required by independent claim 7. The wrappers of wrapper database 40 are not provided as a result of a search back to the user interface. The wrappers are merely descriptions of the information source and its requirements that are used to allow the aggregation engine to translate a user inquiry into an appropriate format. The Office Action's allegation that the wrapper database 40 discloses an advertising board for advertising the services of at least two separate information content suppliers is thus clearly erroneous as the result of any alleged search of the wrapper database 40 is not provided back to the user interface, and is certainly not provided back to the user interface through the first searching agent. That is, the

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query router 39 (the alleged first searching agent) clearly does not transfer the results of a wrapper database search to the user interface. This is clearly shown by Fig. 3 which shows directional arrows only proceeding from query router 39 to wrapper DB 40 and then to aggregation engine 38 in one direction. There are no arrows leading back from the wrapper DB 40 to query router 39 in Fig. 3 and certainly none from wrapper DB 40 to user interface 34.

The Office Action alleges that Christianson's query router 39 discloses the claimed first searching agent for searching a first advertising board for services of information brokers. (See pg. 3, lines 7-8 of the Office Action). Applicant respectfully disagrees with this allegation. Col. 8, lines 1-3 of Christianson explicitly states that the query router determines the relevance of each information source to a given user query and returns the N most relevant sources. The query router 39 thus performs direct searching of the information sources, as opposed to a search of services of information brokers (which in turn perform the search for content from the information sources). The query router thus interprets the user query and selects information sources, and is thus (if anything) an information broker itself, rather than a searching agent for searching an advertising board for information brokers which will in turn search another board for content.

As noted above, the results of a search of a second advertising board is ultimately transferred to the user interface through the first searching agent. (See last paragraph of claim 7). The query router 39 (i.e., the alleged first searching agent) clearly does not transfer such results to the user interface. For example,

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there is no directional arrow from query router 39 back to user interface 34. Data flow is only from the user interface 34 to query router 39 and not vice versa.

The Office Action also alleges that the query router relevance data discloses a first advertising board for advertising services of the information brokers. Applicant respectfully disagrees with this interpretation. In short, query router relevance data (data for providing a ranking of information sources) is not an information broker. A broadest reasonable construction of query router relevance data for performing a ranking does not include an information broker.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 7-11, 17 and 30-31 are not anticipated by Christianson and respectfully requests that the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) be withdrawn.

Claims 12-15 and 27-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Christianson in view of Burt et al (U.S. '482, hereinafter "Burt"). Since claims 12-15 and 27-29 at least indirectly depend from independent claim 7, Applicant submits that the comments made above with respect to claim 7 apply equally to claims 12-15 and 27-29. Applicant submits that Burt fails to remedy the above described deficiencies of Christianson. Applicant thus respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103 be withdrawn.

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New Claims:

New claims 32-35 have been added to provide additional protection for the invention. Claims 32-33 depend from claim 30 and claims 34-35 depend from claim 31, and thus Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are allowable for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to these base claims.
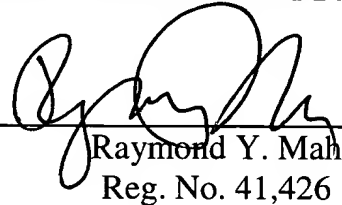
Conclusion:

Applicant believes that this entire application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests a notice to this effect. If the Examiner has any questions or believes that an interview would further prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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